



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TO State Board of Education

FROM: Mike Flanagan

DATE: March 2, 2009

SUBJECT Presentation and Approval of Modifications to the Grade 3-8 MEAP  
Writing Assessments

To correct issues with the writing portion of the MEAP, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) staff has needed to either fix problems or institute changes to avoid future problems. The problems stem mostly from the test being the shortest, and therefore least precise, of MEAP assessments. Limits on the test's length have also limited the ability to achieve broad and consistent coverage of grade level content standards in writing.

To prevent major consequences for individual students and schools, a systemic solution is needed. In light of concerns with the amount of testing, lengthening the writing assessment in every grade is not a viable option. Therefore, two changes in writing assessments are being recommended.

The first is to assess writing in grades 4 and 7 only beginning in the Fall of 2010. The time and funds currently expended to produce, score, and report the writing assessments in grades 3, 5, 6, and 8 would be reallocated to expand and improve writing assessments for grades 4 and 7. By focusing on these grades, the assessments can be lengthened to safeguard writing results against future issues and to consistently measure a broader range of writing Grade Level Content Standards. This change also reduces the amount of testing in grades 3, 5, 6, and 8, which is particularly significant for the youngest students who will take two (reading and math) rather than three assessments.

The second recommended change is to discontinue the writing assessments in grades 3-8 in the Fall of 2009 and instead pilot the new grades 4 and 7 writing assessments. This will give schools an opportunity to see the new writing assessments before being held accountable for performance.

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**It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve changing the MEAP writing assessment from administration in grades 3-8 to administration in grades 4 and 7 and field testing new writing assessments in grades 4 and 7 in Fall 2009 in lieu of operational assessments, with implementation of the new writing assessments in Fall 2010, as described in the Superintendent's memorandum dated March 2, 2009.**